



[Home](#) [News](#) [Opinion](#) [Movies](#) [Music](#) [Events/Exhibits](#) [About Us](#)



Getaway: Deep in the heart lies the color blue Spend next weekend watching the beautiful displays of spring bluebonnets along the Gulf Coast of Texas.

by Cheré Coen

Bluebonnet Festival of Texas

Chappell Hill, Texas, about an hour west of Houston

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday

Admission: Free, but parking is \$5. No street parking allowed.

On the Web: chappellhillmuseum.org/festivals.htm

Accommodations: lillianfarms.com

One of the most popular festivals in Texas, and one of the most unique nationwide, is the annual Bluebonnet Festival in Chappell Hill.

This April 18 and 19, the 2009 festival will honor the spectacular displays of bluebonnets dotting the hillsides, pastures and roads of the Hill Country of Texas and feature juried exhibitors in a variety of mediums, country-style food, live entertainment and music and tours of the historic community. A special Wildflower Photo exhibit (the region is home to numerous wildflowers, not just bluebonnets) will be on display at the Chappell Hill Museum Exhibit Gallery during April and May.

The festival titled the “Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas” by the Texas Legislature is free, as is admission to the historic museums. Your only cost is parking, which is \$5. Viewing the bluebonnets of the area is, of course, free, as well.



Photo courtesy Washington Co. Chamber of Commerce

There are fabulous places to stay in Washington County, including Lillian Farms Bed and Breakfast, a Texas-size farmhouse situated on 230 rolling acres with a wraparound porch where visitors can watch the sun rising over cow pastures or setting in a brilliant display where horses roam. There are several suites to choose from, including the Bed of Bluebonnets Suite with pastel blue walls and mahogany beds and a large bathroom with hand-painted bluebonnet tiles. Visitors can relax in a king-sized bed beneath a dome of clouds and angels in the Angel's Nest Suite. And for something a little more masculine, the Longhorn Suite comes furnished with Texas-style furniture and faux leather cowhide walls.

Because Lillian Farms is a working cattle and horse ranch, chances are visitors will watch new calves and foals frolicking about.

At the nearby quaint town of Round Top, The International Festival Institute at Round Top, a performing arts facility created by legendary pianist James Dick, will be offering a weekend of poetry April 17-19 as well. The event will feature numerous poets including honored guest poet and environmental activist W. S. Merwin, open mics, workshops and special meals. For information, visit festivalhill.org.

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